

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, think about what \$2.3 billion would buy today. If the American people knew what Congress was planning to do with this large sum of money, they would be appalled. Does anyone here honestly think the American people would choose to spend this money to transport nuclear waste through their States, their communities, their towns and their backyards? I do not think so. Yet this is exactly what H.R. 1270, the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1997 will do.

Today, schools need more teachers, communities need more police, veterans need a cost-of-living adjustment, and the hard-working men and women of this country need a tax break. Why then, Mr. Speaker, do some in this body contend that the \$2.3 billion should be used to subsidize nuclear powerplants? It is an unfair, unfunded mandate.

H.R. 1270 seeks to create an interim storage facility at Yucca Mountain, Nevada, to temporarily store nuclear waste. Why endanger Americans when it is infinitely safer and seven times cheaper to keep this waste on site?

#### THE 101st BIRTHDAY OF ELENA E.L. CHRISTIAN

(Ms. CHRISTIAN-GREEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. CHRISTIAN-GREEN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to say congratulations and happy birthday to Elena E.L. Christian, who is 101 years old today and who happens to be my grandmother.

This great lady is a native of the island of St. Kitts. At about 3 years old, she traveled with her mother and siblings to the island of St. Croix, then one of the islands of the Danish West Indies.

Fifteen years later, she witnessed the lowering of the Danish flag and the raising of the American Stars and Stripes as we became the United States Virgin Islands and she later, an American citizen.

She has given her long life in service to the education of our children and to the St. Johns Anglican Church. She continues to be a role model for all of us who, while we might not attain her age, we can still aspire to her level of commitment and achievement.

Happy birthday, Grandma.

#### A MESSAGE TO THE MIDDLE CLASS

(Mr. TIAHRT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, I have a message for all of those in the middle class out there: Every time you hear the liberals attacking tax cuts as tax cuts for the wealthy, hold onto your wallets. Because when liberals talk about tax cuts for the wealthy, they

are really talking about you, the middle class.

That is right, Mr. Speaker. Tax cuts for the wealthy are code words for tax cuts for the middle class, and the big-government crowd will have none of that.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, it is the same big-government crowd that acts as if they are doing you a favor by letting you keep what is already yours. Of course, they do not really think you are entitled to keep the fruits of your labor. The only thing the big-government crowd thinks that you are entitled to is the fruits of other people's labor.

Surprise, surprise, the politicians are the ones who get to decide what to take and what special interest groups to give it to.

Let us give the middle class a tax break and stop Washington from wasting so much of middle-class taxpayers money.

#### THE IRS

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, the IRS, in denying the 1996 tax return and refund to Pamela Damon, said, Pamela Damon, you are dead. You have been dead for 26 years. Now, if that is not enough to bury your 1040, Pam went to the Social Security Administration. They called the IRS and they said, Pam is here in our office, she is alive. They said, Pam's presence is not enough. She is dead as far as the IRS is concerned.

Beam me up, Mr. Speaker.

I recommend that Congress do two things. No. 1, hire a proctologist to perform brain scans on all those morticians at the IRS. And No. 2, pass H.R. 367, that simply transfers the burden of proof to the IRS.

Unbelievable. Pam Damon is alive.

#### ON SCHOOL CHOICE

(Mr. ARMEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands would be willing to let me also join her in wishing a happy birthday to her grandmother. And may she have 101 more happy birthdays.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that every single person alive in the world, but especially in this great country, should have as much personal freedom and liberty as their acceptance of personal responsibility will allow. And I have found that, for most persons, we will find them never so willing to accept personal responsibility and the expectations of the rewards of the accompanied freedom as they are when it comes to the education of their children.

That is why I am introducing today on behalf of all the parents of Washing-

ton, DC, who have so thoroughly expressed their desire for more freedom of choice in the selection of schools for their children, a bill that would enable even the most poor of those parents to select the school that they think is best for their children through the use of a system of opportunity scholarships for those children.

Yesterday I had the opportunity to visit Holy Redeemer School, a private school where children are educated because their parents have found the way to get them included in a better alternative. Mr. Speaker, I saw happy, healthy, young people who love their school and who love to learn.

Mr. Speaker, almost without exception, their favorite courses were math and science. We could not have academic curriculum too rigorous for these children to enjoy when they got to go to the school of their choice. We have 800 children in Washington, DC, today who sit idly in a waiting line, hoping for that opportunity, that hope encouraged by loving parents. We ought to help them. We have the bill to do so.

#### WORKFARE PROVISIONS OF WELFARE REFORM

(Mrs. MEEK of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring attention to the workfare provisions of the welfare reform. Welfare recipients who must work for their benefits under the new welfare reform law must be protected by existing Federal labor laws.

When the welfare reform bill was passed, Congress gave very little guidance to the States for determining how they would apply existing employment laws to welfare recipients. As a result of it, many States are going off the handle trying to determine how they are going to work with the labor laws. We never said that, the Congress never said that the Fair Labor Standards Act, including minimum wage provisions, applied to welfare recipients. Welfare recipients in work programs should indeed earn the minimum wage.

There are some people, Mr. Speaker, who want to overturn that decision. They think it is OK for people who are on welfare to make less than the minimum wage. I say to this Congress that people who are on welfare and going into work deserve the minimum wage. Welfare recipients deserve the dignity of equal treatment with their fellow workers. The minimum wage does that. They are entitled to the protections of the wage and hour laws. They are not second class citizens. Minimum wages are not inflated wages. They are decent wages, Mr. Speaker.